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SERVICE DATE - LATE RELEASE AUGUST 27, 2003

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD

DECISION

STB Docket No. AB-33 (Sub-No. 171X)

UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD COMPANY--ABANDONMENT EXEMPTION--IN
WASHINGTON COUNTY, IL

Decided: August 27, 2003

Union Pacific Railroad Company (UP) filed a notice of exemption under 49 CFR 1152 Subpart F-Exempt Abandonments to abandon an 18.10-mile line of railroad, known as the Sparta Branch, extending from milepost 41.1 near Oakdale to the end of the track at milepost 23.0, near Hoyleton, in Washington County, IL. Notice of the exemption was served and published in the Federal Register on August 1, 2003 (68 FR 45312-13). The exemption is scheduled to become effective on September 2, 2003.

The Board's Section of Environmental Analysis (SEA) served an environmental assessment (EA) in this proceeding on August 8, 2003. In the EA, SEA states that the National Geodetic Survey (NGS) has identified nine geodetic station markers that may be affected by the proposed abandonment. Therefore, SEA recommends that UP consult with NGS and provide NGS with 90 days' notice prior to disturbing or destroying any geodetic markers. SEA also states that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, St. Louis District (Corps), has submitted comments stating that the proposed abandonment may involve activities that would require Corps permits. Therefore, SEA recommends that a condition be imposed requiring UP to consult with the Corps and obtain all applicable permits prior to conducting any salvage activities. Comments to the EA were due by August 25, 2003. No comments were received by the due date. Accordingly, the environmental conditions recommended by SEA in the EA will be imposed.

As conditioned, this decision will not significantly affect either the quality of the human environment or the conservation of energy resources.

It is ordered:

1. This proceeding is reopened.
2. Upon reconsideration, the exemption of the abandonment of the line described above is subject to the conditions that UP: (1) consult with NGS and provide NGS with 90 days' notice prior to disturbing or destroying any geodetic markers; and (2) consult with the Corps and obtain all applicable Corps permits prior to conducting salvage activities.

3. This decision is effective on its service date.

By the Board, David M. Konschnik, Director, Office of Proceedings.

Vernon A. Williams
Secretary